



Dakota Wellness Program

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Wellness team members for
our monthly 15-minute
wellness webinar.

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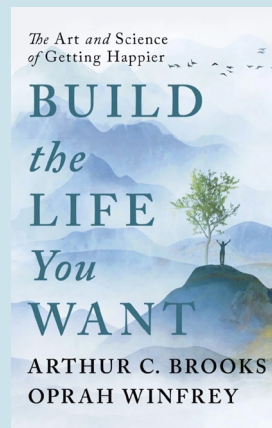


NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
RETIREMENT SYSTEM

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HEALTH PLAN

The U-shaped curve of happiness

Research on happiness has found an interesting pattern called the “U-shaped happiness curve.” Studies show that people often feel happiest during childhood and later adulthood, while happiness levels may dip during middle age. Experts believe midlife can bring added stress from careers, finances, caregiving and daily responsibilities. The encouraging news is that happiness often increases again as people grow older. Older adults tend to focus more on meaningful relationships, gratitude, purpose and enjoying the present moment. They may also worry less about outside pressures and appreciate life’s simple joys more deeply. Wellness researchers say healthy habits such as exercise, quality sleep, social connection, mindfulness and spending time in nature can support emotional well-being at every stage of life and help people build greater happiness over time.



Monthly book club

Build the Life You Want: The Art and Science of Getting Happier by Arthur C. Brooks and Oprah Winfrey

Build the Life You Want: The Art and Science of Getting Happier by Arthur C. Brooks and Oprah Winfrey explores how happiness is not something that simply happens – it is something we can build through daily habits and choices. Using research from psychology, neuroscience and emotional wellness, the authors explain how managing emotions, strengthening relationships and finding purpose can improve overall well-being. The book encourages readers to focus less on perfection and more on emotional resilience, connection and gratitude. With relatable stories and practical tools, it offers a hopeful and realistic guide for creating a happier, healthier and more meaningful life in today’s busy and stressful world.

Discussion questions

- **The book explains that happiness is built through habits and emotional management rather than constant pleasure. What daily habits do you think have the biggest impact on long-term happiness?**
- **The authors discuss the importance of relationships and social connection. How have friendships, family or community affected your own well-being and resilience during stressful times?**
- **One message in the book is that difficult emotions are a normal part of life. How can learning to accept and manage uncomfortable emotions help people live healthier and happier lives?**

Ask the expert

Do I really need to warm up and cool down when I exercise?

Yes – both are essential, even when time is tight. A short warm-up (about five minutes) prepares your body for movement by increasing blood flow, raising your heart rate and loosening joints with dynamic moves like arm circles, walking or leg swings. After your workout, a three to five minute cool down helps your heart rate gradually return to normal and reduces stiffness. Finish with stretching the muscles you used, holding each stretch for 30–60 seconds. These simple steps improve recovery, enhance mobility and reduce injury risk over time overall health.



Positive body image

Many people struggle with how they feel about their bodies, especially since bodies naturally change over time. Even when we understand this logically, it can still be hard emotionally. Positive body image isn't about loving your appearance every day – it's about body neutrality. This means shifting attention away from size or shape and toward what your body helps you do, experience and enjoy. Body image also moves like a pendulum; some days feel easier and more accepting, while others are more challenging. On harder days, affirmations can help reframe thoughts: my body supports me, my worth isn't tied to weight and I can care for myself with kindness and respect.

Supplement safety

The supplements aisle is full of products promising quick fixes, but dietary supplements are not the same as prescription drugs. Unlike medications, supplements are not tested or approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for safety or effectiveness before they reach consumers. That's why caution is important.

Whenever possible, aim to get vitamins and minerals from whole foods. Supplements are meant to “add to” a healthy diet, not replace it, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Keep these safety tips in mind: some vitamins and minerals can build up in the body or interact with medications if taken in excess. Choose brands that are third-party tested, such as United States Pharmacopeia (USP)-verified products. While some people may benefit from a daily multivitamin or vitamin D – especially in low-sunlight regions like the Midwest – not everyone needs supplements. Always talk with a healthcare provider before starting anything new.

Preventive health

Prevent type 2 diabetes – join our free diabetes prevention program

Did you know that an estimated 115.2 million American adults have prediabetes? That is more than two in five individuals. As a Sanford Health Plan member, you have access to a **FREE**, evidence-based diabetes prevention program designed to help you make small lifestyle changes that lead to significant health improvements. The Change Your Weigh Diabetes Prevention Program is offered in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Diabetes Prevention Program. This year-long, group coaching program focuses on practical strategies to help you lose weight, increase physical activity and reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

You will learn to:

- Eat healthier
- Be more active
- Manage stress
- Overcome obstacles

The virtual group program includes:

- Weekly meetings for the first four months
- Monthly meetings for the remaining eight months
- Guidance from a trained lifestyle coach
- Support from peers on the same journey



Registration is now open for late summer and fall classes. To learn more, visit: sanfordhealthplan.com/members/wellness/diabetes-prevention or scan the QR code.

High protein chickpea trail mix

This high-protein chickpea trail mix is sweet, savory and crunchy – made with roasted chickpeas, nuts, seeds, dried fruit and dark chocolate for the perfect snack blend.

Ingredients:

1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas
1 tablespoon melted coconut oil
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 cup dried edamame

1/2 cup dried cherries
1/4 cup almonds
1/4 cup sunflower seeds
1/4 cup dark chocolate chips

Instructions:

Prep: Preheat oven to 400°F [204°C]. Drain 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, then pat them dry on a few layers of paper towels. Remove any loose skins, but don't worry about getting them all.
Roast: Transfer dried chickpeas onto a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon melted coconut oil, tossing to evenly coat. Bake for about 25 minutes or until golden and crispy. Remove from oven and immediately toss with 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon. Let chickpeas cool completely.
Assemble: Combine cooled chickpeas with 1/2 cup dried edamame, 1/2 cup dried cherries, 1/4 cup almonds, 1/4 cup sunflower seeds and 1/4 cup dark chocolate chips. Enjoy!

Storage notes: This will keep in an airtight container at room temperature for up to one week. For maximum crunch, keep in a dry container away from humidity.

A note about freezing: This recipe is not freezer-friendly due to the chocolate and texture changes. If you're taking this on the go or packing it for a kid-friendly protein snack, just make sure to keep it away from anything with moisture. Put it in a zip-top bag to keep the chickpeas and edamame dry and crunchy.

Nutrition Facts: Makes 8 servings: 1 serving (about 1/2 cup) | Calories per serving: 305 | Protein: 10g
Carbohydrates: 35g | Fat: 15g | Saturated fat: 4.5g | Sodium: 80 mg | Fiber: 6g | Sugar: 13g



Monthly Observances

UV safety month

National minority mental health awareness month

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ONLINE ACCOUNT

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NDPERSwellness@sanfordhealth.org
(800) 499-3416 (TTY: 711)



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